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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7166  
INFO RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 0518  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 7505  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 5667  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 4104  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1545  
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 4148  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 3241  
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI PRIORITY 8100  
RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI PRIORITY 0123  
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 5699  
RUEHON/AMCONSUL TORONTO PRIORITY 0448  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 2435  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY  
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 001528

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DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/INS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/07/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [MOPS](#) [IR](#) [CE](#)

SUBJECT: SRI LANKAN FOR MIN TO TRY TO DISSUADE PRESIDENT  
FROM GOING TO IRAN

REF: A. COLOMBO 1506

[1](#)B. COLOMBO 1439

Classified By: Ambassador Robert O. Blake, Jr. Reasons: 1.4(b, d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Tourism Minister Moragoda told Ambassador that he was traveling to Tehran in mid-November to advance the President's trip to Iran. Embassy has continued to underline our concerns about Iran's proliferation programs and sponsorship of terrorist activities known to the most senior Sri Lankan officials. In a one-on-one meeting on November 7, Foreign Minister Bogollagama said that he was not in favor of the timing of the planned visit and undertook to persuade President Rajapaksa to postpone it. Ambassador explicitly noted our grave concern about Iranian sponsorship of terrorist activities, including actions against U.S. forces in Iraq. He said that a visit to the leading international state sponsor of terrorism would undercut Sri Lanka's effort to muster international support for its own struggle against terrorism and the LTTE. Bogollagama agreed to convey this point to President Rajapaksa. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Tourism Minister and presidential advisor Milinda Moragoda told Ambassador on November 5 that he and Treasury Secretary P.B. Jayasundera would be going to Tehran in

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mid-November to advance President Rajapaksa's visit to Iran. He noted that both he and the President were "very conscious of the international community's concerns." Moragoda agreed that it would be useful to have a paper outlining U.S. concerns about Iran's nuclear program and its support for terrorism in Iraq and other parts of the world.

[1](#)3. (C) Embassy subsequently provided a package of information to Moragoda including copies of:  
-- Secretaries Rice and Paulsen's October remarks announcing new U.S. sanctions on Iranian entities and the associated fact sheet;

-- Under Secretaries Burns and Levey's on-the-record briefing on the same subject and  
-- The 2006 S/CT Country Report on Terrorism - chapter on state sponsors of terrorism.

¶4. (C) In the context of a November 7 meeting that focused principally on human rights (septel), Ambassador told Foreign Minister Bogollagama that President Rajapaksa's planned visit to Iran later this month comes at a time of extreme international sensitivity over Iran's proliferation and terrorist activities. The U.S. had grave concerns about Iran's support for terrorist actions against U.S. forces in Iraq, and other terrorist groups. The U.S. State and Treasury Departments had recently designated additional Iranian entities, including the Revolutionary Guards and the Quds Brigade for U.S. bilateral sanctions. He pointed out that Iran would seek to exploit contacts such as high-level visits to claim it is not isolated.

¶5. (C) In a private segment from which notetakers were excluded, the Foreign Minister noted that he was not accompanying the president on the planned trip and had advised Rajapaksa that the timing was bad. He undertook to suggest to the President that he postpone the trip. He added that the idea for the trip had originated as a stopover on the way back from the Commonwealth Summit in Kampala, implying that the idea was not thought through. Ambassador advised the Foreign Minister to tell the President that if Sri Lanka's top foreign policy priority is to garner international support for its fight against terrorism and the LTTE, it will undercut that goal through a high-profile visit to the country that the U.S. and others view as the leading state sponsor of terrorism. Bogollagama said that was a good point he would convey.

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¶6. (C) COMMENT: Embassy believes that its intensive lobbying campaign has put the GSL on notice that we are watching this trip carefully. We cannot be sure that the President will heed his Foreign Minister's advice to postpone the trip; however, the likelihood that Sri Lanka might attempt to negotiate deals that would violate UN sanctions may be diminishing.  
BLAKE